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ABSTRACT

Outlines are presented of recommendations for recruiting and retaining talented black youth in teaching careers in Arkansas. These recommendations are made for education administrators at both the state and university level. It is pointed out, however, that the key to the long-term expansion of the minority teacher pool lies in the elementary and secondary schooling of black children. Teaching must be perceived as a rewarding career by children in their earliest school years and they must be imbued with the belief that they can be successful and respected. A bibliography of 52 citations is included. (JD)

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The Winners Circle:
Will It Continue to Include Minority Teachers?

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The Winners Circle:
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INTRODUCTION

The Holmes report, Tomorrow's Teachers and the Carnegie report, A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century both emphasize the central role of teachers and indicate an impending nationwide shortage of teachers during the coming decade. Few educational issues have caused as much concern as those relating to teacher supply and demand especially as it relates to minority recruitment. The size of the black college population has shrunk by 15% since 1976 and the proportion of minority teachers in the United States is predicted to drop from twelve to five percent by 1990. The Office on Civil Rights reported that 20,254 education degrees in 1975-76 were awarded at the bachelors level with this dropping to 11,490 in 1982-83. Twice as many minority education majors fail current required standardized teaching tests as white students, and the number of education graduates from historically black colleges, still the source of two out of three black teachers in the country, has plummeted.

The shift is away from education and social sciences into more technical fields. Indications are that education loses out to other higher status, higher-paying career choices among those who have the greatest choices. Recent degree recipients certified to teach but not teaching are much greater than the number teaching with or without certification or the number of newly qualified to teach. Data from the Center for Education Statistics for 1985 reports that 18% of minority candidates who were newly qualified to teach did not apply for a teaching job. In a recent survey of 14,600 certified black teachers only 8,500 were teaching. Furthermore, about 25% of newly prepared teachers select fields other than teaching.

It is predicted that in the south 1/3 or more of veteran black teachers have 25 or more years experience and are rapidly approaching retirement. National data indicate that blacks are the only minority group that has lost ground in higher education in the past decade. If these trends continue minority representation in the national teaching force could be reduced to less than 5% by the year 2000.

RECRUITMENT PLAN FOR ARKANSAS

In Arkansas we are mindful that there is a diminishing presence of minorities in higher education and feel that steps should be taken immediately to reverse that trend. Implications for this loss of talent are dramatic. Arkansas could be faced with a virtual absence of black teachers, professors, and educational administrators within a decade. To that end the governor appointed a task force chaired by Dr. Charles Dunn, president of Henderson State University, that in September 1, 1988 made the following recommendations:

1. Create a senior level position in state department of education with the primary function of recruitment and retention of minority educators.

2. Develop a program to make the public aware of the seriousness of the problem.

3. Districts would implement a home instruction program to increase home and family involvement.

4. State should require kindergarten attendance and support it.

5. Establish grant of $2000 per year to 150 new black students per year entering Arkansas institutions of higher education and who plan to pursue teacher education programs. These may be renewed for a second year. Eligibility- black, first time freshmen in teacher education, academic potential based on standardized tests and high school grades, and completion of selected courses in high school.

6. Establish scholarship grants of $3000 per year to 100 new black students . May be renewed for a second year.

7. Fund summer enrichment programs at colleges and universities such as YOU and Upward Bound for intermediate and junior highs school students.

8. Gather data on success/failure of blacks in teacher preparation programs and report to governor and board of higher education.

9. Provide funding for counseling of minority students and development of a comprehensive support system for minority students while in college.

10. Provide financial assistance to enter and remain in teaching.

11. Develop an incentive program in matching funds for salaries to public school and colleges and universities which increase the employment of minority faculty

12. Expand available matching funds for minority faculty to obtain the doctorate.

13. Raise salaries to regional averages.

14. Create minority chairs in Colleges of Education.

15. Hire para-professionals to relieve teachers of all non-professional duties

16. Sponsor summer teaching institutes.

17. Establish a professional practice commission for the teaching profession.

18. Provide low interest loans to minority teachers willing to teach in economically deprived areas.

19. Arrange exchange programs between systems with large minority teacher populations (Detroit, Atlanta, Chicago) and Arkansas schools to provide black role models for Arkansas students and to encourage teacher recruitment from those systems.

20. Make use of churches and civic organizations to recruit.

RECRUITMENT PLAN FOR HENDERSON STATE UNIVERSITY

This interest at the state level has led to plans by universities within the state to further refine these suggestions. Henderson State University recently appointed a committee to develop a plan for the university to increase the number of minorities that elect teaching as a career choice. This committee developed the following plan:

Certain conditions predispose success of this initiative and are imperative for the success of this effort.

1. Institutional commitment.
2. University-community cooperation.
3. Extensive financial support.
6. Employment of a young, energetic, enthusiastic, knowledgeable and dedicated black person as a major recruiter.

Short term initiative

1. Provide scholarships for incoming minority freshman who declare majors in education and who meet specified standards.
2. Target schools with high percentages of black students.
3. Provide extensive and intensive recruiting of students in targeted schools.
4. Offer scholarships to upper level majors.
5. On-campus visits for prospective recruits. Intensive and innovative experiences.
6. Identify key minority persons in communities with high concentration of minority students. Locate as many Henderson graduate (minority) as possible to assist us.
7. Solicit cooperation from significant minority groups in the communities, Greek, civic, service, and churches. 8. Solicit cooperation from student groups: Student AEA, Kappa Delta Phi, and CBS.
9. Invite representatives of targeted groups on campus for special appreciation and orientation sessions.
10. Invite high school counselors to recommend minority students with potential for teaching.
11. Actively recruit minority students from community colleges. Cooperation between university and community college personnel.
12. Provide opportunities for high school students to visit the campus for brief periods in order to learn about university life through first-hand experiences. During the visits, students might spend time in classes, talk to current students in the program, find out about financial aid and application procedures, and participate in campus social activities.
13. Work to ensure that minority students presently enrolled in teacher education on campus are successful and satisfied because of their needs. Additional things that might be done for minority students:
    a. provide for positive press releases of minority majors in hometown newspapers.
    b. provide for regular articles to appear in campus paper about minority education majors.
    c. create a minority student advisory council.

d. encourage a student "replacement" campaign. The purpose of this campaign is to encourage each minority education major to recruit another student to take his/her place in the program by the time the student graduates.

Long-Term

Due to the critical nature of this problem and the fact that it is national in scope, the ultimate success of this effort rests on long-term initiatives. Those who can effect change must recognize it as critical and be committed to do whatever is necessary to start an upturn.

1. Increase salaries by working with the Arkansas Education Association, legislators and others.
2. Increase the number of minority faculty in the school of education and throughout the campus. The employment of minority administrators is critical.
3. Provide opportunities for minority faculty at HSU to become visible in meaningful university related endeavors in the communities in which the university serves.
4. Develop and implement pre-collegiate programs in the schools in our service area.

Pre-Collegiate Programs

1. Let academically talented minority youngsters register as guest students while in high school with the understanding that courses taken will count for degree credit upon their admission.
2. Initiate informational programs about the teacher education program in minority communities, schools, etc.
3. Establish a toll free line to call about the school of education.
4. Develop network with elementary and secondary teaching associations.
5. Host "College for Kids" programs during the summer or designated weekends for youngsters.
6. Develop feeder schools in an effort to create a tradition of students from the feeder school attending the university and enrolling in teacher education program.
7. Direct contact with minority youngsters in middle school and maintain as they progress through high school.
8. Contact parents and encourage them to encourage their children to think about choosing teaching as a career.
9. Day of Pride on campus and invite outstanding minority students to attend and thus be recognized for their accomplishments.
10. Bring them to campus.
11. Make use of principles, counselors, and teachers.
12. Work with State Department of Education personnel and other groups who are seeking ways to increase the pool of minority teachers in the state.

ELEMENTS OF RECRUITMENT PLANS IN USE NATIONALLY

In higher education we must understand and assist others in understanding the basic issues relating to minority student recruitment and provide options to enhance recruitment efforts by describing current successful programs. Some suggestions in use across the country for improved recruitment include:

1. Tap two year colleges.
2. Provide job and scholarship assurance programs for middle school students.
3. Bringing high school students into a tutorial situation.
4. Providing programs to welcome prospective members to the teaching fraternity at an earlier stage.
5. Encourage students to switch or complete enough hours for certification.
6. Run television spots featuring teaching as rewarding.
7. Remind students that teaching can lead to management.
8. Provide a statewide support program.
9. Implement a teacher cadre at the middle school level.
10. Implement a high school teacher/mentor program.
11. Teach a college university freshman and sophomore career seminar program.
12. Provide forgivable loans.

CONCLUSIONS

The real solution may not be reallocation of able minority students but redevelopment of strategies to increase the potential pool of students who complete college because to recruit enough minorities to achieve parity would require that 60% of all minority college graduates enter teaching. Colleges to be successful must begin to seek students several years before will be ready to consider teaching careers. Hillary Clinton believes this shortage of black teachers is not a failure of higher education, but unfortunately is the result of the twelve year educational system which fails to instill in disadvantaged children the belief that they can succeed. There is a need to develop a program in kindergarten to foster self-worth and a sense of whether they are going to make it or not. Dr. Hornbeck, Maryland State Superintendent of Schools, also sees 3 and 4 years olds from poor families as a key to the long-term expansion of the minority teacher pool.

We must begin to match our liberal arts and science programs with what students will be tested on and modifications of the curriculum such as five year programs must be studied carefully. They greatly increase the cost of entering education while most existing salary structures do not adequately compensate for this extra year of training. State competency tests of basic skills must be examined as they communicate to students that only prospective teachers, as opposed to those planning to enter other professions, require testing for mundane skills. State certification requirements that make no difference whatsoever in the quality of teaching while increasing bureaucratic costs of the educational enterprise must be removed.

The root of the problem is the public perception that teachers don't do anything very sophisticated. This is reinforced by the working conditions we impose on teachers. How many true professionals have parking lot duty this week? The problems of attracting larger numbers of minorities to the teaching profession are part and parcel of the larger problems such as the reward structures and negative attitudes toward the profession. To adequately address the issues will require us to overcome our educational myopia and stop attempting to heal broken legs with band-aids.

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